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Tuesday, January 15, 1952

I went this morning to the religious service at the Church of the French Chapter of the Order of Malta on rue du Temple. Gérard de Rohan Chabot, the Bailli of the Chapter, and Robert de Billy, another high dignitary, had invited me to attend the Low Mass in memory of the deceased chief, Prince Chigi. Many of the diplomats were present in this fine old church. The scarlet uniforms, gold spurs, and embroidered capes of the Knights were magnificent.

Upon my return to the office, the new Mexican Minister called on me. Then I joined E. for lunch at Simone Petsche's. Her butler had insisted, it seems, that I be invited to consume the two best remaining bottles in Maurice's cellar -- one an 1898 Meursault (surprisingly good), and a fine magnum of Château Margaux 1924. The David-Weils were the other guests, as well as little Sasha and David and a daughter and granddaughter of Simone.

Mr. David-Weil, a most public-spirited elder citizen (he was born in San Francisco, and for years ran the

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banking house of Lazard in Paris) is exercised over the action of Thomas Fisher (Ruth Page's husband) in insisting on overbidding the French Museums at auction for the purchase of Delacroix's studio in Paris.

I went into this matter later in the afternoon with Bill Tyler and Lawrence Morris, who were thoroughly familiar with it. It seems Fisher is resentful against the French Government for various reasons, and is not disposed to yield his position. Meanwhile the Paris newspapers are in full cry after him, and I want to talk to one of his four lawyers about it. The sum involved is less than $12,000., but he insists that he will pay much in excess to have his way.

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